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NPIC/R-286/64

May 1964

PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION REPORT

ARALSK AIRFIELD, USSR



CIA

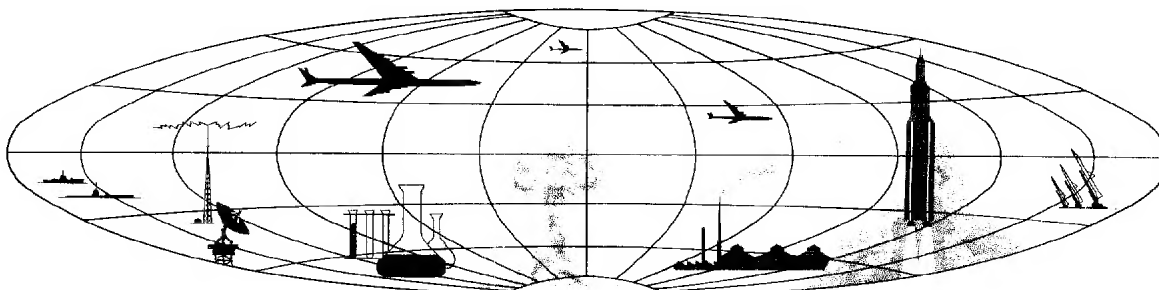


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NATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC INTERPRETATION CENTER



Declass Review by NIMA/DOD

ARALSK AIRFIELD, USSR

SUMMARY

Aralsk Airfield is believed to be the air support base for Vozrozhdeniya Island on the basis of recorded flights from the airfield to the island. The airfield probably has other missions, also. A study of the airfield and its facilities [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Approximately nine nondescript buildings have been erected since the facility was first seen on [REDACTED] photography of [REDACTED]. Small numbers of aircraft, ranging from 6 to 14, have been observed at the airfield.

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DESCRIPTION

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Aralsk Airfield [REDACTED] coordinates 46-49N 61-37E) is located 3 nautical miles (nm) northwest of the town of Aralsk, USSR, to which it is connected by a dirt road (Figure 1). The Aktyubinsk-Tashkent single-track railroad passes close to the north end of the field. The airfield (Figure 2) consists of two intersecting unpaved runways and may

be fenced. The field was observed on poor-quality [REDACTED] photography in [REDACTED] and has been observed several times since then on [REDACTED] photography, the best of which was taken in [REDACTED]

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Airfield Facilities. Facilities at Aralsk Airfield comprise seven major buildings which are all medium-sized, one-story, barracks or

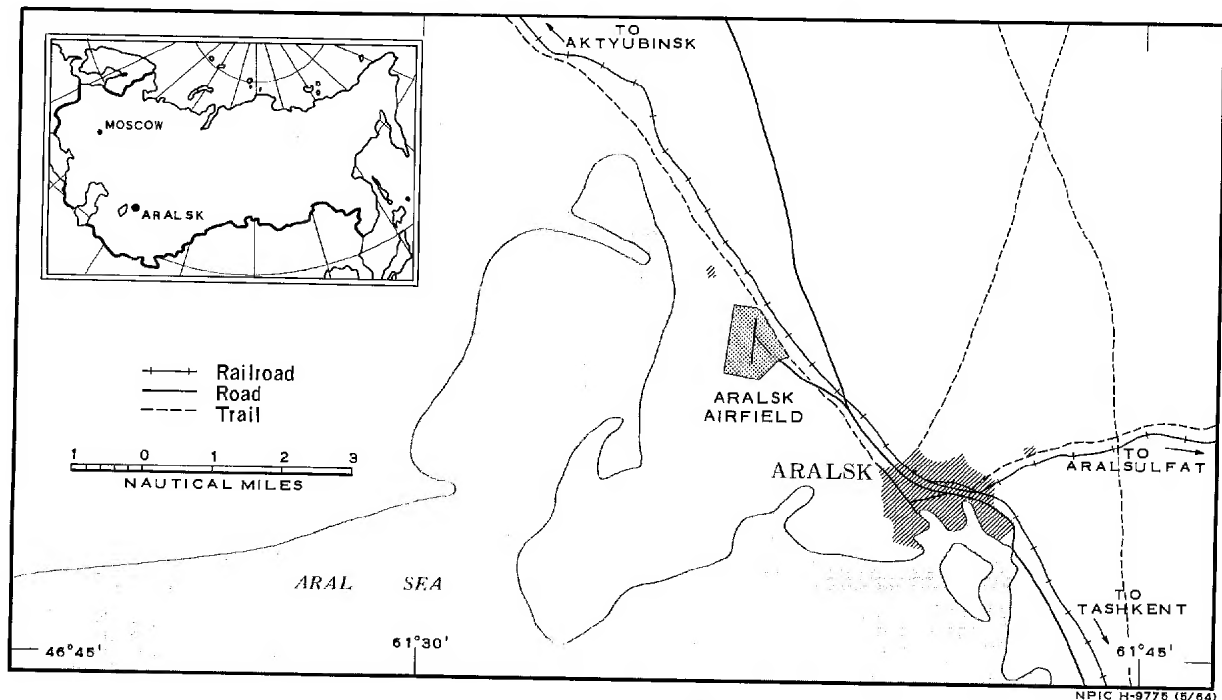


FIGURE 1. LOCATION MAP.

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warehouse-type structures, a number of smaller structures, two or more communications towers, and a probable POL facility (Figures 2 and 3). Dimensions of the major buildings are given in Figure 3. Buildings 2 and 3 are probably maintenance shops; the rest of the buildings are probably housing, storage, administrative, and communications units. Nine buildings have been constructed since [] - two large, two medium, and five small structures.

Ground photography of [] (Figure 4) shows four to six cylindrical tanks

horizontally disposed on the surface of the ground east of building 1 (Figure 3). Subsequent [] photography reveals no indications of these tanks so that it is likely that they have either been buried or moved. The wide variance in the sizes and shapes of these tanks suggests that they were designed to hold various quantities of several kinds of liquids or gases. Tanks of this type are not the usual tanks used to store POL products at an airfield, nor are they in a location suitable for this use.

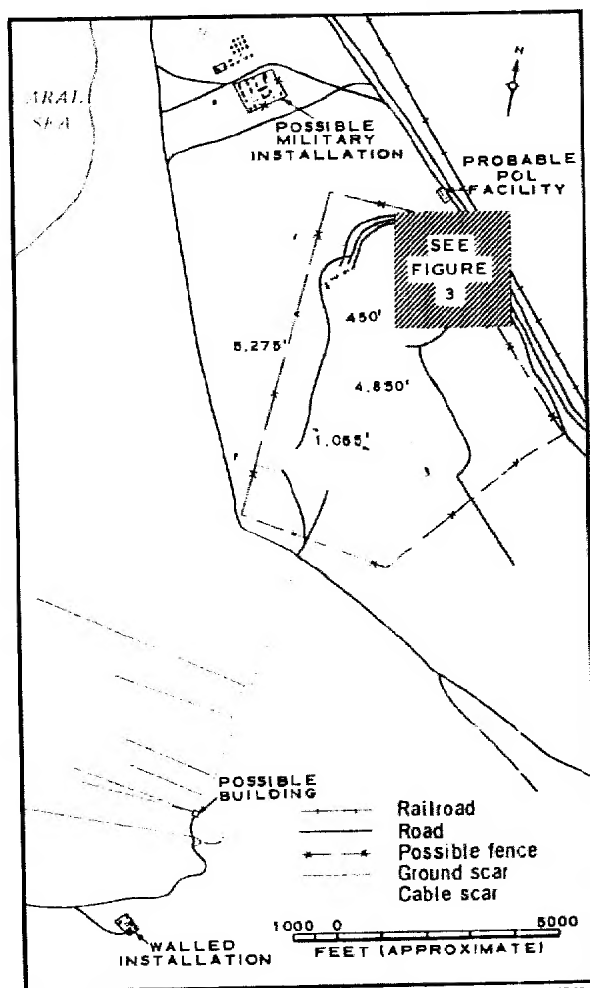


FIGURE 2. ARALSK AIRFIELD AND NEARBY INSTALLATIONS.

Aircraft Observed at Aralsk Airfield. Aircraft have been observed at Aralsk Airfield on both aerial and ground photography at various times between []. Dates of photography, number, and types of aircraft observed are shown in Table 1.

It has been observed that the aircraft parked nearest to the support buildings in a line parallel with the railroad line, are always dark toned or nearly black. The others are light toned with a high degree of reflectivity.

Table 1. Number and Type of Soviet Aircraft Observed at Aralsk Airfield Between []

Date of Photography	Number and Type of Aircraft
[]	10; 6 probable CAB, 4 unidentified single engine
[]	14; 4 CAB, 3 COACH, 3 COLT, 3 CREEK, 1 HOUND
[]	6; 1 possible CAB, 3 possible CRATE, 2 small unidentified
[]	8; all unidentified straight wing
[]	6; all unidentified because of snow cover

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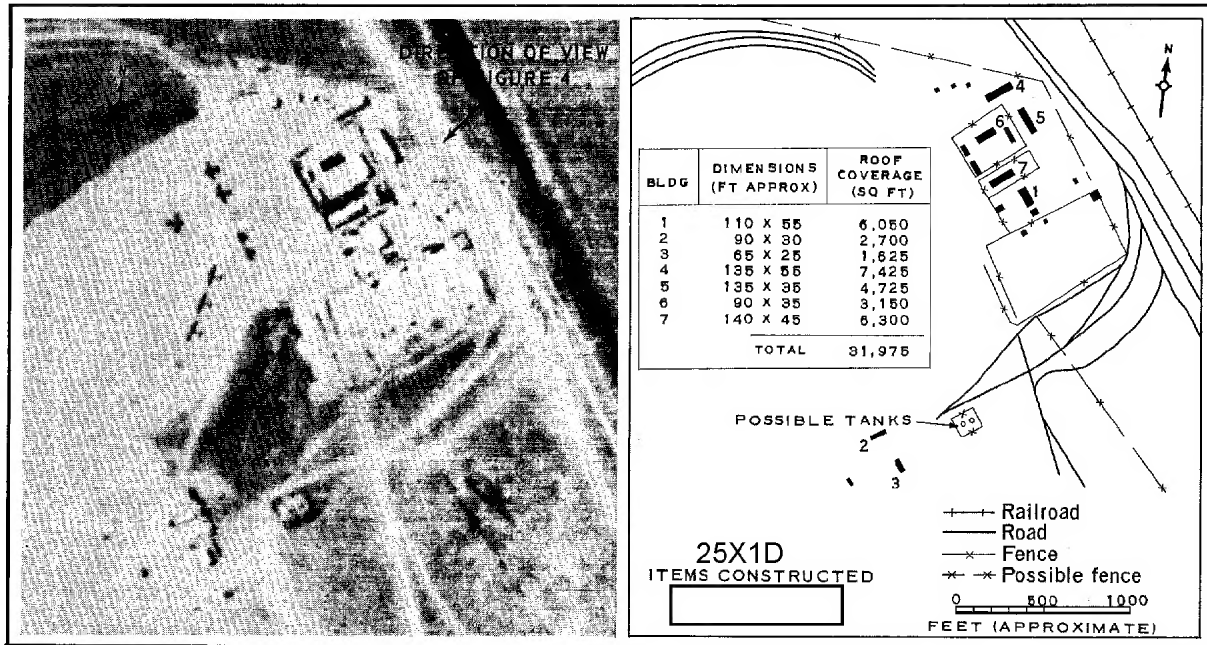


FIGURE 3. ARALSK AIRFIELD FACILITIES, 25X1D

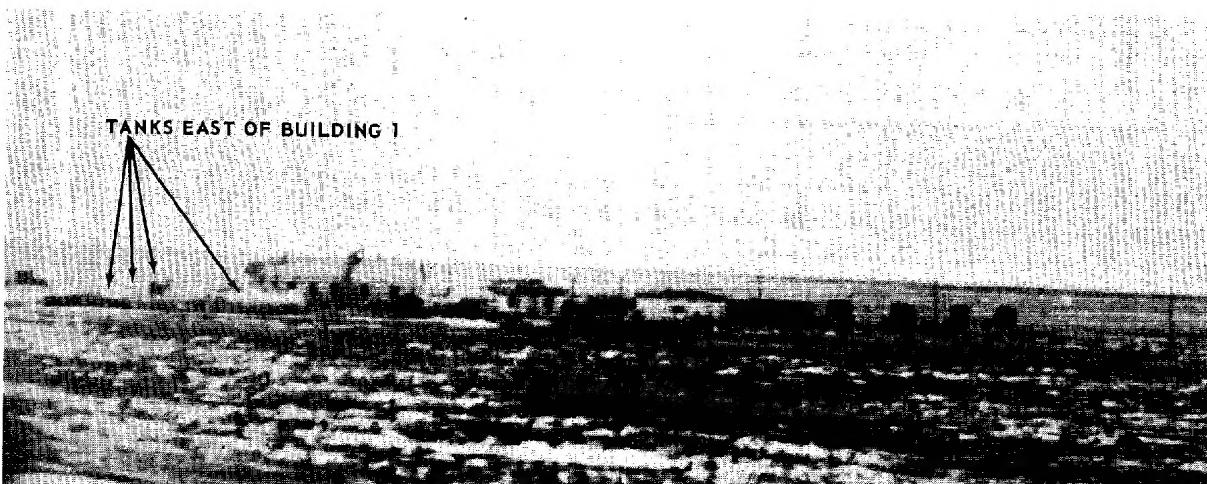


FIGURE 4. GROUND PHOTOGRAPH OF PART OF ARALSK AIRFIELD FACILITIES, FEBRUARY 1960. The photograph, taken from a railroad car, shows the horizontal, cylindrical tanks at left.

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photography, taken after a snowfall, indicates no effort to clear either planes or runways, suggesting that the field may be little used during the winter months.

Installations Near Aralsk Airfield. A

facility that has been described as a possible military installation is situated about one nm north-northwest of the airfield. 2/ A similar facility is situated about one nm east of Aralsk beside the rail line that goes to Aralsulfat.

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It is possible that both installations are military in nature, but it is more probable that both are involved in the collection and initial processing of Glauber's salt (hydrated sodium sulphate), which is the principal industry of the area.

A small, walled installation is situated approximately 2.5 nm south of the airfield on a line with the center of the wider runway (Figure 2). The walled-in compound contains three large buildings and three or four small buildings; no change has been observed in this facility since [REDACTED]. A well-defined

set of three parallel cable scars extends from the south end of the runway most of the way to the walled installation, but apparently terminates at a possible building. A faint set of subparallel, straight ground scars intersect the triple cable scars at right angles. The function of the grid thus formed is difficult to determine. The three cable scars emanating from the runway may be part of a ground control approach system and the other scars may be the result of mineral exploration activities which have been extensive in the region.

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CONCLUSIONS

[REDACTED]
The tanks could be used to store fluids other than fuel. The storage-type buildings present have no visible distinctive characteristics that

might indicate the nature of the stored materials. The fenced area on the south side of the support area could be interpreted as a corral in which test animals could be held pending shipment.

REFERENCES

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REFERENCES (Continued)

MAPS OR CHARTS

ACIC. US Air Target Chart, Series 200, Sheet 0246-7-200A, 1st ed, Feb 60, scale 1:200,000 (SECRET)

DOCUMENTS

25X1A

1. Air, Moscow. [REDACTED] *Trip, Moscow-Tashkent by Rail and Air*, Mar 60 (SECRET)

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2. NPIC. R-1023/62, *Geographic Study, Aral Sea Area, USSR*, Jun 62 (SECRET, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Downgrading Prohibited)

REQUIREMENT

CIA. C-SI4-81,269

NPIC PROJECT

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Approved For Release 2006/01/17 : CIA-RDP78B04560A002200010044-6

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